



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

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For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 514-6933

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District Man Pleads Guilty in Connection With Stabbing Death of Wife and Two Children

WASHINGTON - A 46-year-old District man, Joseph R. Mays, has pled guilty to three counts of Second Degree Murder while Armed in connection with the March 21, 2009, stabbing deaths of his 38-year-old wife, Erica Peters, and her two sons, 10-year-old, Dakota Peters, and 11-year-old, Eric Harper, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced today.

Mays pled guilty today in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, and will be sentenced on November 12, 2010, by the Honorable Gerald I. Fisher. Mays faces a possible maximum sentence of 120 years of incarceration. Pursuant to the Superior Court guidelines, Mays is facing a likely sentence of 30 to 46 years in prison.

At today's plea hearing, Mays admitted that during the morning of Saturday, March 21, 2009, while armed with a knife, he stabbed his wife, Erica Peters, and her two sons, Dakota Peters and Eric Harper, multiple times inside of 2000 Maryland Ave., N.E. #104, Washington, D.C. Officers of the Metropolitan Police Department arrived shortly after the stabbings. All three of the victims, along with the defendant and his three-year-old daughter, were found inside of the second floor apartment, where there were no signs of forced entry. Erica Peters and her two sons died as a result of their injuries. Only Mays and his daughter survived. An autopsy conducted on the remains of Erica Peters, Dakota Peters, and Eric Harper at the Medical Examiner's Office for the District of Columbia found the cause of death to be multiple stab wounds to the head and body and the manner of death a homicide.

In announcing the guilty plea, U.S. Attorney Machen commended the work of Metropolitan Police Detectives Anthony Paci, Sean Cain, Dwayne Partman, Robert Arrington, Michael Murphy, and Edwin Truesdale of the Violent Crime Branch, along with Mobile Crime Officers Valerie Campbell and Tina Ramadahn, as well as Fifth District Officers Atubakr Karim and Tyshena Wallace. He also praised Paralegal Specialist Kelly Margaret Blakeney and Victim Witness Advocate Marcey Rinker of the U.S. Attorney's Office. Finally, he commended Assistant U.S. Attorney Charles W. Cobb, who investigated and is prosecuting the case.

